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ABSTRACT

Created in 1990 by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Running Start (RS) program allows eleventh and twelfth grade high school students to take college-level courses tuition-free. In 1992-93, the first full year of statewide implementation, approximately 3,508 students participated in the program, while that number increased to over 8,600 students by 1995-96. Research indicates that 59% of the 1995-96 RS students were female, 14% were students of color, the average credit load taken by the students was 9-10 credits per quarter, and the students' average grade point average (GPA) was 2.8. The 400 RS students who transferred to the University of Washington during fall 1995 had an average GPA of 3.03 and averaged 15 credits per quarter. Since K-12 funds are used to pay for the students in both their high school and college, RS saved Washington taxpayers approximately $14.1 million in 1995-96 and saved participants $6.6 million in college tuition costs. In response to K-12 administrators' concerns over the shift of funds and students from high school advanced placement programs to the RS program, the Board has recommended an increase of $3.6 million for the 1997 budget to help affected districts. Finally, in fall 1997 a plan will be implemented to reduce the high school credit awarded for completion of college coursework. Data on RS enrollments and RS students entering the University of Washington are attached. (TGI)

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ED 409 047

RUNNING START

1995-96
Annual Progress Report
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

January 1997

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The Running Start Program

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Running Start

A progress report from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

January 1997

Background

The Running Start program was created by the 1990 Legislature to expand educational options for public school students. **Running Start allows 11th and 12th grade high school students to take college-level courses, tuition-free, at the 32 community and technical colleges.** Students earn both high school and college credits, with five college quarter credits equal to one high school credit.

The 1994 Legislature expanded Running Start to give several public four-year universities the option to offer the program. The program now includes Washington State University at Pullman, Eastern Washington University at Cheney and Central Washington University at Ellensburg.

Taxpayers saved about $14 million through the Running Start program last year, and the students who participated saved $6 million in college tuition costs.

The Legislature initiated Running Start with a two-year pilot program from 1990-92. Statewide operation began in 1992-93. In the first full year of statewide operation, about 3,508 high school students enrolled full- or part-time at the community and technical colleges. That number increased to more than 8,600 for the 1995-96 year.

Running Start students represent about 4 percent of the total number of full-time juniors and seniors in Washington public high schools. While students attend the colleges free of tuition charges, they must provide their own transportation, books, and supplies.

The Running Start Option

More than 8,600 high school students around Washington state participated in Running Start in 1995-96. By allowing them to earn high school and college credits simultaneously, Running Start has reduced the amount of time they have to spend in school and has held down college costs for students and their families.

To participate in Running Start at most colleges, students must pass a standardized test to determine whether they have the skills needed to succeed at college.

Running Start Enrollments by College

Fall Quarter 1996

College	Headcount
Peninsula	289
Grays Harbor	90
Olympic	174
Skagit Valley	525
Everett	315
District 6	
Seattle Central	251
North Seattle	118
South Seattle	130
Shoreline	209
Bellevue	410
Highline	278
Green River	365
Pierce	414
Centralia	161
Lower Columbia	210
Clark	409
Wenatchee Valley	205
Yakima Valley	261
District 17	
Spokane	173
Spokane Falls	422
Big Bend	144
Columbia Basin	368
Walla Walla	258
Whatcom	482
Tacoma	317
Edmonds	315
South Puget Sound	347
Bellingham	60
Lake Washington*	5
Renton	47
Bates*	61
Clover Park*	67
Total	**7,880**

** Bates, Clover Park, and Lake Washington also offer alternative programs for high school students in addition to Running Start.*

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Running Start

To preserve the college environment for adults while accommodating the younger students, colleges limit the number of Running Start students who may take any one class.

Also, colleges have worked to ensure that their registration procedures do not result in Running Start students displacing adults at community and technical colleges. In fact, the enrollment of new Running Start students has enabled colleges to add sections of existing classes, expanding enrollment opportunities for adults as well as Running Start participants.

By allowing students to earn high school and college credits simultaneously, Running Start has reduced the amount of time they have to spend in school and has held down college costs for students and their families.

Funding for Running Start is designed to compensate colleges for the cost of educating K-12 students. Colleges are reimbursed about $75 per credit for academic programs and $95 per credit for vocational programs by K-12 districts whose students participate in Running Start. The K-12 districts retain 7 percent of those funds for administrative overhead and student counseling.

Who participates in Running Start?

Research by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) indicates that **71 percent of Running Start students take 10 or more credits per quarter; 59 percent are female; 14 percent are students of color; and 42 percent work part-time while attending college.**

The academic performance of Running Start students — and the support for the program among students and parents — has been very positive. The average grade point of Running Start students is 2.80, about the same as the average of regular community and technical college students.

The University of Washington reports that the 400 Running Start students who transferred to the University during fall 1995 have an average grade point of 3.03 and are averaging 15 credits per quarter. And **89 percent of all Running Start students surveyed in 1992 said they would participate again.**

Ongoing issues in Running Start

The Running Start program represents a major departure from traditional educational practices, and has raised the visibility of several issues related to educational funding and students' movement between the K-12 and college systems.

- One of the most significant financial impacts is the savings that result from students earning college and high school credits at the same time. Because K-12 basic education funds are used for Running Start (the K-12 funds "follow the student" to his or her college), high school students are able to attend college tuition-free. **Last year, the program saved students and their families $6.6 million in college tuition costs. In addition, taxpayers pay only one time to support Running Start students in both the high school and college systems. This "two-for-one" aspect of Running Start saved taxpayers about $14.1 million in 1995-96.**

- K-12 administrators have expressed concerns that the transfer of students and the shift of funds to the colleges — reflecting the popularity of Running Start — have made it more difficult for some high schools to maintain comprehensive programs, especially in college preparatory courses.

The two-year college system is supporting a request to the Legislature by the Superintendent of Public Instruction's office for $3.6 million in the 1997 budget to address the financial impact of Running Start in certain K-12 districts where the movement of students has caused clearly-identified financial problems for local high schools.

- Discussions continue over the way college credits are used to satisfy students' high school graduation requirements. Currently, students receive one (1) high school credit for completing five quarter-hours or three semester-hours of college course work. The State Board of Education has proposed to reduce that credit equivalency to three-quarters (0.75) of a credit, but the board has delayed the change until fall 1997 to give the Legislature time to consider the $3.6 million budget request.

RUNNING START
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
1995-96

SUMMARY

Running Start continues to be a successful program. Although enrollment continues to increase, the large percentage increments experienced during the first three years as a statewide program have leveled out. In 1995-96 over 8,600 students enrolled for 4,700 FTEs--a 16 percent increase over 1994-95 enrollment figures. The high schools of the state continue to provide excellent preparation for students who are entering Running Start at the community and technical colleges and the universities, as evidenced in the GPA achievements of these students.

BACKGROUND

The 1990 Legislature created the Running Start program as a part of the "Learning by Choice" law, which was designed to expand educational options for public high school students. The Running Start portion of the law allows qualified eleventh and twelfth grade students to take college level courses at the 32 community and technical colleges. Running Start students earn both high school and college credits for completing courses at the college level. The 1994 legislature expanded the program to include Eastern, Central and Washington State Universities. The intention of the legislature was to provide Running Start program access in the local communities served by these universities and where no two-year colleges were available to directly serve students.

To initiate the program in 1990 the Legislature authorized a two-year pilot program. Five community colleges were selected to participate during the 1990-92 academic year (Everett, Pierce, Skagit Valley, South Puget Sound and Walla Walla Community Colleges). The pilot program involved 37 high schools within the college service areas. Program enrollments for the first year were 358 students.

The program began statewide in 1992-93 when about 3,350 students enrolled at the community and technical colleges.

RUNNING START PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Eleventh and twelfth grade students, as defined by the high school and who are qualified for admission, may attend community and technical colleges and three universities free of tuition. However, they must provide their own transportation, books and consumable materials.

For the 1995-96 academic year, colleges were reimbursed at statewide uniform rates by the K-12 districts whose students participate in Running Start. Colleges received about $77 per credit for academic programs and $91 per credit for vocational programs. K-12 districts retain seven

percent of the funds for counseling and overhead. During the pilot program years, reimbursement rates varied by school district according to the rate of reimbursement from the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

By allowing students to obtain high school and college credit simultaneously, Running Start reduces the amount of time students spend in school and reduces college costs for students and their families. Dual credit also allows the state to save up to two full years of state funding for students enrolled. In 1995-96, it is estimated that the program saved the state $14.1 million dollars because of the dual credit that students earn for participating in the program. Parents and students also saved an estimated $6.6 million in tuition.

Flexibility in scheduling allows Running Start students to meet other commitments for education, jobs, or family responsibilities. Of those enrolled in the program, 42 percent of the students worked part-time and two percent worked full-time.

Running Start presents a challenging option for qualified students who may perform better in a college setting than in a traditional high school.

Students continue to report that taking classes with regular college students and adults offers a new and challenging experience to learning.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RUNNING START STUDENTS--1995-96

Running Start students, as a group, are very similar to previous years in demographic characteristics.

- Fifty-nine percent of the students were female.
- Fourteen percent were students of color.
- The average credit load taken by the students was 9-10 credits per quarter. Seventy-one percent took ten or more credits during Fall 1996, but many students take one course per quarter with the balance of classes taken in high school.
- One percent were students with disabilities.
- Forty-two percent of the students worked part-time, and over two percent worked full-time.
- Approximately 79 percent of the students were enrolled in academic courses, and 21 percent in vocational or technical programs.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND TRANSFER OUTCOME MEASURES

- The average grade point average of Running Start students is approximately 2.8. This is about the same, but slightly above the average entering freshman grade point average.

The University of Washington reports the following information concerning Running Start students who have transferred to the university (attached).

- For Fall Quarter 1996, 400 Running Start students enrolled. Two hundred-eight were female (52 percent). Program students achieved a grade point average of 3.02. That is about the same as entering freshmen at the U of W. The students also took about the same credit load as regular freshmen.

- 101 (25 percent) of the entering UW transfers in the Running Start program were students of color.

- For Fall 1995, the previous year, 297 Running Start students entered the University of Washington, and 92 (31 percent) were students of color.

Considering research, surveys and quarterly meetings of community and technical colleges involved in Running Start, the following information is provided.

- The program is well received by students and parents, as originally found in the 1992 research study.

- The use of uniform statewide reimbursement rates has reduced bookkeeping time considerably. Counseling time and costs are substantially more than those for regular students.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND RELATED ISSUES

Funding Request

High schools, that are the most heavily impacted by loss of students who are choosing Running Start, report that local high school advanced placement programs are being diminished by the lower number of students participating. This results in fewer options for students who decide to stay full-time at the high school. Some high schools report that they are considering discontinuing their advanced placement programs because of the high per student cost of offering the program to the students who chose to remain.

In addition, the high cost and time spent in counseling Running Start students is not being addressed by the overhead costs retained by the school districts. The dual enrollment nature of Running Start requires intensive counseling by high school and college staff to assure testing, placement and the selection of courses that will meet high school diploma and college degree requirements at the same time.

These unintended consequences limit full endorsement of the program by the K-12 system. In order to maintain comprehensive high school programs, additional resources are needed. The Superintendent of Public Instruction has requested $3.6 million from the biennial operating budget to address these issues. The request is strongly supported by community and technical college system representatives as discussed during the preparation of the system's 1997 legislative program.

Credit Equivalency

In 1994-95 the State Board of Education, at legislative request, created a task force to review how higher education credit is applied to high school graduation. The task force recommended that the higher education credit value remain at the current agreement, which is that "five quarter credits or three semester credits are equivalent to one high school credit." The task force also recommended, with equal importance, that the legislature be requested to fund Running Start at a rate to compensate for the added costs of operating the program and assist high schools' advanced placement programs offered in the high school. As a result, the State Board of Education postponed the implementation of the lower credit value of .75 to Fall Quarter 1997.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, Running Start continues to be an excellent program option for high school juniors and seniors who are qualified. Parents and students strongly support the program because it expands their educational choices while reducing the time required to complete their education and tuition costs. Many students report that the program offers an additional educational challenge by allowing them to participate in the same classes and learning atmosphere as regular college and adult students. The State benefits from the savings in state aid because of the dual credit awarded to students. Colleges and the University of Washington report that Running Start student performance is at least equal to the performance of other entering-level freshmen as measured by grade point averages.

RECOMMENDATION

The permanent resolution to the credit equivalency question and legislative funding, as requested by the State Board of Education, to address the counseling and comprehensive program needs of high schools are needed to maintain the current success of the program.

Running Start Enrollments
FY 1995-96

College	Districts	Headcount	FTEs
101	Peninsula	254	180.58
102	Grays Harbor	119	65.59
103	Olympic	208	144.17
104	Skagit Valley	466	224.74
105	Everett	346	213.78
106	Seattle District		
	Seattle Central	368	178.84
	Seattle North	176	84.76
	Seattle South	152	68.24
	Seattle Voc. Inst.	0	0
107	Shoreline	240	125.33
108	Bellevue	390	231.26
109	Highline	214	117.78
110	Green River	357	197.69
111	Pierce	430	214.41
112	Centralia	175	109.08
113	Lower Columbia	204	112.79
114	Clark	540	232.81
115	Wenatchee Valley	216	120.81
116	Yakima Valley	238	124.73
117	Spokane District		
	Spokane District	201	115.22
	Spokane Falls	490	260.93
118	Big Bend	201	120.91
119	Columbia Basin	299	189.53
120	Walla Walla	319	139.94
121	Whatcom	556	250.76
122	Tacoma	281	149.14
123	Edmonds	396	205.53
124	South Puget Sound	441	190.08
125	Bellingham	61	59.76
126	Lake Washington	3	0.67
127	Renton	85	56.07
128	Bates	106	129.12
129	Clover Park	106	99.81
Total		**8638**	**4714.86**

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Source: SBCTC MIS Report SR3105

1995-96 Running Start Unduplicated Headcount and Demographics

	Number	% of Total Reported
BY GENDER		
Male	3,443	40.1%
Female	5,146	59.9%
Total Reported	8,589	
BY RACE/ETHNIC		
Asian	535	6.4%
African American	230	2.7%
Native American	110	1.3%
Hispanic	242	2.9%
White	7,182	85.9%
Other Race	65	.8%
Total Reported	8,364	
BY DISABLED		
Disabled	86	1.0%
Not Disabled	8,552	99.0%
Total	8,638	
BY FULL-TIME/PART-TIME		
Full-time	5,562	64.4%
Part-time	3,076	35.6%
Total	8,638	

NOTE: For the full-time/part-time counts, if a student was full-time any quarter during the year, he is counted as full-time. This was necessary because a student may be full-time one quarter and not the next, or a student may be full-time in one quarter and not enrolled at all the next quarter.

Running Start Students
Entering University of Washington
Autumn 1995
Characteristics and First Year Performance

Entering Characteristics

High School GPA		3.61
SAT Total		
	Mean	1093.7
	Range	670 - 1490
SAT Verbal		
	Mean	508.8
	Range	230 - 740
SAT Math		
	Mean	584.9
	Range	310 - 800
ACT		
	Mean	24.8
	Range	15 - 34

Entering Transfer Credits

Mean	35.6
Range	3 - 90

Running Start Students
Entering University of Washington
Autumn 1995
Characteristics and First Year Performance

Gender			
	Male	131	43.96%
	Female	167	56.04%
	Total	**298**	**100.00%**
College Class			
	Freshman	297	99.66%
	Sophomore	1	0.34%
	Junior	0	0.00%
Minority Ethnic Distribution			
	African-American	6	2.01%
	Native American	2	0.67%
	Asian-American	74	24.83%
	Hispanic American	10	3.36%
	Ethnic Minority Total	**92**	**30.87%**
Largest Feeder High Schools			
	Lake Washington	10	
	Lakes	9	
	Roosevelt	8	
	Inglemoor	8	
	Rainier Beach	7	
	Bellingham	7	
	Sehome	7	
	Wenatchee	7	
	Curtis	7	
Largest Feeder Community Colleges			
	North Seattle	7	
	Bellevue	6	
	Whatcom	5	
	Clark	3	
	Everett	3	
	Spokane Falls	3	

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

Running Start Students
entering
Autumn 1996
Characteristics and First Year Performance

Gender

Male	192	48.00%
Female	208	52.00%
Total:	400	100.00%

College Class

Freshman	393	98.25%
Sophomore	2	0.50%
Junior	5	1.25%

Minority Ethnic Distribution

African-American	8	2.00%
Native American	1	0.25%
Asian-American	80	20.00%
Hispanic American	12	3.00%
Ethnic Minority Total:	101	25.25%

Largest Feeder High Schools

Sehome	14
Shorewood	10
Inglemoor	10
Mt. Rainier	9
Mountlake Terrace	9
Kentridge	8
Issaquah	8

Largest Feeder Community Colleges

Bellevue	44
Shoreline	25
Edmonds	23
Green River	18
Clark	17
Everett	16

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Running Start Students
entering
Autumn 1996
Characteristics and First Year Performance

Entering Characteristics

High School GPA	
Mean	3.66
Range	2.48 - 4.00
SAT Total	
Mean	1121
Range	740 - 1440
SAT Verbal	
Mean	490.5
Range	250 - 690
SAT Math	
Mean	599
Range	380 - 780
ACT	
Mean	25.2
Range	15 - 34

Entering Transfer Credits

Mean	37.2
Range	1.5 - 90

UW Performance - Entering Autumn '95	AUT 95	WIN 96	SPR 96
Quarterly GPA			
RST	3.02	2.99	3.07
Freshman	3.05	2.99	2.99
Community College	3.05	3.07	3.10
Quarterly Credit Load			
RST	14.9	15.0	14.6
Freshman	15.0	15.0	14.9
Community College	12.8	13.2	13.1

Continuation Rate

83.9% (250 of 298) were registered on 10th Day of Autumn 1996
Average Credit Load was 14.6

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